

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 NEA-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01
INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15
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FM AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6796
INFO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO
AMEMBASSY NAIROBI
AMEMBASSY NDJAMENA
AMEMBASSY SANA
AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PDEV, PINT, PGOV, SU
SUBJ: NIMEIRI'S SPEECH AT OPENING OF PEOPLE'S ASSEMBLY

1. NIMEIRI DELIVERED STATESMANLIKE ADDRESS TO FIRST SESSION OF PEOPLE'S ASSEMBLY MARCH 13. REVIEWING GROWTH OF SELF-GOVERNMENT IN SUDAN, NIMEIRI TRACED PROGRESS THROUGH INDEPENDENCE, RE-ORGANIZATION OF PROVINCES, FOCUS ON DEVELOPMENT FOR RURAL POPULATION RATHER THAN URBAN ELITES, SPREAD OF EDUCATION, AND REGIONAL AUTONOMY FOR SOUTH, ALL OF WHICH PROMOTE NATIONAL UNITY. PATRIOTIC UNITY IS ESSENTIAL FOR FURTHER PROGRESS. UNITY WILL CONTINUE TO BE IMPROVED THROUGH NATION-WIDE DEVELOPMENT, THROUGH RECENTLY AUGMENTED PEOPLE'S LOCAL GOVERNMENTS, THROUGH SOLE POLITICAL PARTY SUDAN SOCIALIST UNION, AND THROUGH RECONCILIATION AND AMNESTY CAMPAIGN. NIMEIRI SEES CONVENING OF DEMOCRATICALLY
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ELECTED ASSEMBLY AS MILESTONE ON ROAD TO STABLE, UNIFIED NATION.
2. NIMEIRI REVIEWED STATUS OF SIX-YEAR-DEVELOPMENT PLAN, NOW ONE YEAR OLD, AND PROSPECTS FOR ITS SECOND YEAR. HE LISTED TEN "STRATEGIC AREAS" WHICH WILL BE ADDRESSED IN COMING YEAR; INCLUDING ROADS, AGRICULTURE, SOLID FINANCING BY PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SECTORS, INCREASE OF

PRODUCTIVITY, PROMOTION OF TOURISM, AND DETAILED PLANS TO IMPROVE QUANTITY AND QUALITY OF EDUCATION OF ALL KINDS. INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS SUCH AS ROADS, ELECTRIC POWER, RAILWAYS AND PORTS WILL GET MAJOR PUSH.

3. NIMEIRI SAID NEWLY ELECTED ASSEMBLY WAS "FIRST NATIONAL GROUPING FOR WHOLE OF SUDAN AND (ONE) WHICH ACQUIRES LEGITIMACY BY VIRTUE OF ITS COMPOSITION," REFERRING, APPARENTLY, TO RATHER HONEST ELECTIONS AND PRESENCE OF DIVERSE POLITICAL GROUPS IN ASSEMBLY. HE LISTED 20 CRITERIA FOR NEW ASSEMBLY, BEGINNING WITH ACCEPTANCE OF LEGITIMACY OF PRESENT GOVERNMENT AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF PEOPLE'S CHOICE FOR CHIEF EXECUTIVE. HE WANTED GENERAL THEMES AND THRUST OF SUDAN STRATEGY TO BE MAINTAINED, NOT THWARTED, BUT ASSEMBLY IS EXPECTED TO PROVIDE LEADERSHIP AND IMPROVEMENTS WITHIN CONTEXT OF NATIONAL UNITY. HE CAUTIONED ASSEMBLY TO GUARD SOCIAL JUSTICE IN VARYING CIRCUMSTANCES BROUGHT ON BY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, INDICATING ALSO THAT "COUNTRY'S CULTURAL REALITIES" MUST BE RECOGNIZED. NIMEIRI SAID THAT ASSEMBLY SHOULD MAKE SUDAN'S LAWS SO THAT HE WILL NOT HAVE TO ISSUE DECREES AND ORDERS AS HE HAS DONE TILL NOW.

4. NIMEIRI SAID HE SOMETIMES LACKS PATIENCE, GOT PRIORITIES WRONG AND MADE MISTAKES. ASSEMBLIES CAN AVOID SUCH MISTAKES MORE READILY. HE ASKED ASSEMBLY TO FOLLOW SIX-YEAR-PLAN AND NOT ACT ON TEMPORARY SITUATIONS. HE CONCLUDED WITH REMINDER THAT SUDAN HAS ADVERSARIES AND "IS NO LONGER LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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SAFE AGAINST WHAT IS GOING ON AROUND IT." IN ADDITION TO AFRICAN, ARAB AND INTERNATIONAL FRIENDS, SUDAN NEEDS LOYALTY OF CITIZENS. "IT ALSO REQUIRES THAT SUDAN BE PROTECTED BY SYMBOL OF IT HONOR AND MAKER OF ITS GLORY, THE PEOPLE'S ARMED FORCES WHICH NEED TO PROMOTE THEIR ABILITIES AND EFFICIENCY."

5. IN ONE BRIEF PASSAGE NIMEIRI OFFERED INTRIGUING HINT AT POSSIBLE FURTHER POLITICAL LIBERALIZATION. HE SAID SSU IS QUOTE UNITARY POLITICAL UMBRELLA (WHICH) DOES NOT SUPPRESS THOUGHT OR OPINION NOR DOES IT PROHIBIT DIVERSITY OF VIEWS AS LONG AS THESE VIEWS ARE GOVERNED BY A CHARTER DRAFTED BY PEOPLE AND CONSTITUTION ENDORSED BY PEOPLE'S ASSEMBLY UNQUOTE. THIS SOUNDS LIKE TERMS UNDER WHICH SOMETHING LIKE POLITICAL PARTIES COULD BE FORMED, BUT IT TOO SOON TO BE ABLE TO SAY WHETHER, IN FACT, NIMEIRI HAD ANY INTENTION OF SUGGESTING SUCH AN IDEA.

6. COMMENT: NIMEIRI'S SPEECH WAS OBVIOUSLY CAREFULLY PREPARED. HE TOUCHED ON ALL CORRECT THEMES AND AVOIDED EASY MISTAKES OF BOASTING, SUBTLY THREATENING FORMER DISSIDENTS SITTING BEFORE HIM, OR REGARDING ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PLANS WITH SIMPLISTIC ENTHUSIASM. HIS REFERENCE TO LEGITIMACY (HE DID NOT USE EXACT WORD) OF

HIS GOVERNMENT BECAUSE MOST SUDANESE WELCOME IT IN LIEU OF
ANY ALTERNATIVE IS CONSISTENT WITH EMBASSY'S ASSESSMENT.
REMARKABLY FOR GOVERNMENT WHICH HAS SURVIVED SO MANY
COUP ATTEMPTS, PUBLIC APPEARS TO REGARD NIMEIRI AS GROWING
IN STATURE IN HIS OFFICE. HE FACILITATES HIS GENERAL ACCEPTANCE
BY MODERATE, COMMON-SENSE POSITIONS ON MOST TOPICS.
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